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25 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 25 February Meeting of the "Indochina Steering Group"

25X1A

1. [REDACTED] reported that there is a special meeting of the NSC tomorrow to discuss Laos. The DCI's briefing for this session is being put together by [REDACTED]. It will be in three parts, one dealing with the Chinese road, a second being on the situations in Military Region II and the Luang Prabang area, and the third being on the [REDACTED] operation south of Tchepone. A fourth paper strictly for the DCI's background will be done up by OER and will pertain to the levels of Communist supply movements this year as compared with previous years.

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2. [REDACTED] of ONE said his office has completed a piece on Thai/U.S. relations. It will be circulated for comments within the Agency next week. It has a very sensitive annex and should be handled accordingly. The item is self-generated.

3. In response to a question from [REDACTED] said that the NIE on Vietnam five years hence will be the subject of a meeting of the USIB representatives next week, with USIB consideration the week thereafter. [REDACTED] noted that he has word that the State Department has difficulties with the present draft.

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4. [REDACTED] of OER referred briefly to revisions in the approach to the work being done in response to NSSM #99. I gathered that there is no longer any requirement for long term five-year outlooks.

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5. [REDACTED] paid particular note to [REDACTED] able only last night which indicates th [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] This led to a brief discussion of the extensive network of trails and roads

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running through the Panhandle. [REDACTED] talked of the need to block key points in the routes 914 and 923 areas west of Tchepone. [REDACTED] noted that any serious blockage efforts in this area would have to be mounted by the South Vietnamese, not [REDACTED]

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6. [REDACTED] asked what the group thought of the Communist surge of 2,000 tons of supplies in the PDJ area. It was pointed out that some surging always occurs during the dry season. [REDACTED] observed that a semi-annual deposit of supplies is always made for the Pathet Lao. [REDACTED] noted that some Communist forces in the immediate Long Tieng area have encountered recent supply difficulties.

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7. [REDACTED] described briefly a major movement of the Meo nation in Laos. Of an estimated 125,000 "friendly" Meos, about 100,000 of them have been on the move in the first three weeks of February to be relocated in safer areas. This will doubtless disrupt some of the operations using the Meos. The recruiting base will be displaced, the traditional modus operandi in which dependents accompany troops will be terminated, and morale could be adversely affected. (Action: This major relocation of the Meos is something OCI/FE should be fully informed about. The SEA Branch should ensure that it has all the necessary details.)

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8. [REDACTED] reported that ARVN troops are scheduled to be heli-lifted into Tchepone today. The troops involved have been in reserve and have not been committed to [REDACTED]

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Deputy Director of Current Intelligence

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